

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 18, 2003 has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments to the claims, and the following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto. Currently, claims 2, 3, 7, 8 and 12-14 are pending in this application with claim 12 being allowed. By this Amendment, claim 2 has been cancelled and claims 3, 7, 8, 13 and 14 have been amended. No new matter is presented. Accordingly, Applicants request the allowance of claims 3, 7, 8, and 12-14.

Claim Objections

Claim 3 was objected to for clarity. Claim 3 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner in the Office Action dated May 21, 2003.

35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 102(e) Rejections

Claims 2, 3 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 102(e) as being anticipated by Baier et al. (WO 98/57429) and its equivalent (U.S. Patent No. 6,353,372). By this amendment, claim 2 has been cancelled, rendering this claim moot with regard to this rejection. Claims 3 and 7 have been amended to depend from allowed claim 12 and therefore are in condition for allowance.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejections

Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baier et al. (WO 98/57429) and its equivalent (U.S. Patent No. 6,353,372) in view of Ueda et al. (JP 9-167936) or its U.S. equivalent (U.S. Patent No. 6,037,847). Claims 13 and 14 have been amended to depend from allowed claim 12 and therefore are in condition for allowance.

Claims 2, 3 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kondo et al. (JP 2000-91883) in view of Baier et al. (WO 98/57429) or its U.S. equivalent (U.S. Patent No. 6,353,372). Claim 2 has been cancelled, rendering this claim moot with regard to this rejection. Claims 3 and 8 have been amended to depend from allowed claim 12 and therefore are in condition for allowance.

Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kondo et al. (JP 2000-91883) in view of Baier et al. (WO 98/57429) or its U.S. equivalent (U.S. Patent No. 6,353,372) and further in view of Ueda et al. (JP 9-167936 or its U.S. equivalent (U.S. Patent No. 6,037,847). Claims 13 and 14 have been amended to depend from allowed claim 12 and therefore are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

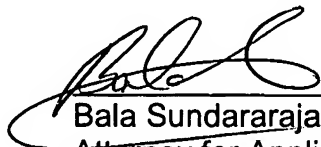
Applicants' amendments and remarks have overcome the objections and rejections set forth in the Office Action dated November 18, 2003. Claim 2 has been cancelled and claims 3, 7, 8, 13 and 14 have been amended to depend upon allowed claim 12. No new matter is presented. Accordingly, claims 3, 7, 8, 13 and 14 are in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request consideration and allowance of claims 3, 7, 8, 13 and 14.

Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance with claims 3, 7, 8 and 12-14 contained therein. Should the Examiner believe the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The Commissioner is authorized to charge payment for any additional fees, which may be required with respect to this paper to Counsel's Deposit Account 01-2300.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures: Replacement Figs. 1, 3, 7, 9 and 14

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